

Sephardic Leaders Seminar Source Sheet

Adam Eilath

4/13

Source #1

Case Study #1: Diverse Classrooms

אשר לשלמה, שו"ת לרבי שלמה אבן דנאן, סימן סג

One student came home to his father around lunch time, and the father asked his son, "My son, what did you learn today". His son answered "Since the morning until now, we barely learned anything except for a little bit of Gemara since there was a new student in class and we had to go slowly until he understood it, due to him, our learning was delayed. When the father heard this he quickly angered and refused to send his son back to the same teacher. Thus the parents and teachers sought my guidance to understand whether the parent owed the teacher a salary for his work, whether he should be fined or whether he was exempt from paying.....The parent also added, "Since this teacher got to this place and delayed and took away learning from the group for the sake of the individual, I do not believe that he will be swift and careful to give my son the education he deserves...and we pay a great deal for our children's education.

וכאשר בא אחד מבני המדרגה ההיא אצל אביו בסעודת הצהריים, שאל האיש את בנו: "בני, במה למדתם היום?" השיבו כי: "מאז הבוקר ועד עתה לא למדנו כי אם מעט בגמרא [...] לרגל הילד החדש הבא אצלנו שהוכרחנו להתנהל לאטו עד אשר למד אותה [...] ומצדו העיכוב בא לנו". כשמוע שמעון אביו את דברי בנו, היטב חרה לו וגמר אומר שלא להושיב את בנו אצל מלמד זה. ובכן, הגישו עצמותיהם ראובן ושמעון, לדעת אם חייב שמעון לשלם חלקו בשכירות המלמד או שייתן קנס, או שמא הוא פטור מכול וכול... (והוסיף שמעון): "כיוון שהגיע המלמד למדרגה זו [...] ועיכב והפסיד את הרבים בשביל היחיד... אינו מאמינו עוד שיהא זריז ונזהר לתת לבני חלק ערכו. ובכגון זה לא הרשינו אותך... ואנו נותנים שכר הרבה. ועל כיוצא בזה אמרו: "חזקה היא שלא משליך אדם כספו בחינם".

Case Study 2: Modern Midrash

Daniel Boyarin

Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash, pg 28

"The verses of the Bible function for the rabbis much as do words in ordinary speech. They are a repertoire of semiotic elements that can be recombined into new discourse, just as words are recombined constantly into new discourse. Just as in a lexicon, words are placed into juxtaposition revealing semantic similarities and differences, so in the midrashic text, semantic

similarities and differences between texts are revealed via new juxtapositions. Just as the words of any language can be placed into new syntagmatic relations, so can the verses of the Bible.”

The Binding of Isaac
Genesis 22: 1-18

<p>Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, “Abraham,” and he answered, “Here I am.” And He said, “Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.” So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his servants, “You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you.” Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together. Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he answered, “Yes, my son.” And he said, “Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them walked on together. They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: “Abraham! Abraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.” And he said, “Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I</p>	<p>וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲגַנִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אַהֲבָתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶדְ-לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ מֹרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלָיךָ: וַיִּשְׁפֹּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ אֶת־חֲמֹרֹו וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עֲלֶיהָ וַיִּקַּח וַיִּלְדֹּ אֶל־הַמִּקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים: בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיֵּשֶׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמִּקְוֹם מֵרְחֹק: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נַעֲרָיו שְׁבוּ־לָכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּזֶר נִלְכָה עַד־כֹּה וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁוֹבָה אֵלֵיכֶם: וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצִי הָעֹלָה וַיִּשְׁפֹּם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲגַנִּי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וַאֲנִי הַשֶּׂה לְעֹלָה: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יְרָאֵה־לּוֹ הַשֶּׂה לְעֹלָה בְנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמִּקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיָּבֹו שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּשֹׁם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לְעֵצִים: וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְשַׁחֵט אֶת־בְּנֹו: וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלֶּאֶד יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם ו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲגַנִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנֶּזֶר וְאַל־תַּעַשׂ לּוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי וַעֲתָה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־יְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי: וַיֵּשֶׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה־אֵיל אַחֵר נֹאֲחַז בַּסֶּבֶךְ בְּקִרְוֹ וַיִּלְדֹּ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֵיל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה תַחַת בְּנֹו: וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שְׁם־הַמִּקְוֹם הַהוּא יְתָנָה וַיְרָאֵה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם בְּהָר יְתָנָה יְרָאֵה: וַיִּקְרָא מִלֶּאֶד יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָהָם שְׁנַיִת מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנִי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ: כִּי־בָרַךְ אֶבְרָכָךָ וְהִרְבֵּה אַרְבָּה אֶת־יִרְעֶךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָחֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שְׁפַת הַיָּם וַיִּרְשׂ זֶרְעֶךָ אֶת שְׁעַר אֲבִיבִי: וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ כָּל־גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ לְעַבְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקֹלִי</p>
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know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me.” When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, “On the mount of the LORD there is vision.” The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, “By Myself I swear, the LORD declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one, I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command.”

Source #2

Almog Behar

Until my Son Reached the Age of Three

From “Poems for prisoners” - 2015

I didn't tell my son about G-d until he reached the age of three
 So that he wouldn't be scared
 And when he turned three, I arranged for a meeting between them
 This is my G-d, I told my son
 This is my son, I told my G-d
 Each of them asked questions about the other
 My son asked
 Is G-d one of our relatives, like a grandparent or uncle?
 Not exactly I answered him
 My G-d asked, what is the name of your son?

עד שהגיע לגיל שלש לא ספרתי לבני על אלהים
 שלא יפחד. וכשנעשה בן שלש ערכתי ביניהם הכרות
 זה אלהי, אמרתי לבני. זה בני, אמרתי לאלהי
 שאלו כל אחד שאלות זה על זה. בני שאל
 האם אלהיך זה הוא אהד מקרובינו, כמו סב
 כמו דוד? לא בדיוק, עניתי לו. אלהי שאל
 מה שם בנך? עניתי לו שמות רבים לבני
 מתוק ומתוק-אל, חמוד וחמוד-אל
 חביב וחביב-אל. בני שאל: מה שם אלהיך? עניתי לו
 שמות רבים לאלהי, הוא אבינו מלפנו, והוא הקדוש ברוך
 הוא,
 והוא רבוננו של עולם, והוא השם יתברך, והוא אל
 ואלהים ואלהי
 אלהי החל אומר: בנך יחידך אשר אהבת, ומיד השמתי
 עצמי

I answered him, my son has many names:
Hamud (sweetie) and Hamud-el, Habibi (beloved) and Habibi-el.
 My son asked, what is the name of your G-d?
 I answered him, my G-d has many names: He is our Father the King (Avinu Malkenu), He is the Holy One Blessed be He. He is the Lord of the Universe, He is the Blessed Name, He is God (El) and G-d (Elokim) and my G-d (Elokai).
 G-d began speaking and said “Your son, your only son, the one you love” and I immediately made myself as someone who could not hear HIS voice.
 My son then asked “Who will you love more”?
 And it made me happy that the word “love” appeared in his speech
 I immediately distracted him with my finger pointing at a plane in the sky and a ladybug that passed between us in the grass
 Instead of telling him “each of these are the works of G-d” I told him, “these things are nice.....right?”

כמי ששוב אינו שומע את קולו. בני שאל: את מי תאהב יותר
 ושמחתי שהופיעה המלה אהבה בדבורו, ומיד הסחתי דעתו בהצביעי
 על מטוס שחלף בשמים ועל חפושית שעברה בינינו בדשא. ובמקום לומר לו
 כל אלו מעשי אלהי, אמרתי לו: נכון?

Source #3

Adi Keisar

“The Binding of Adi”

From “Black on Black” 2016

On the path home
 I inhale air
 My lungs fill
 The air surrounds my wound

 There, no-one breaths

בדרך הביתה
 שואפת אויר
 הראות מתמלאות
 האויר עוקף את הפצע

 שם לא נושמים

<p>On the third day At home in front of the TV I asked my mother “Am I your daughter, your only daughter, the one you love”</p> <p>On the third day, In front of a sink filled with dishes Between the wood and the fire I asked my mother Where is the sacrificial offering?</p> <p>A moment before she lifted her hand, I told my mother That my body is lying And added That I lie to my body as well</p> <p>My body says it will die first And I say, I will</p> <p>On my way out I closed the door On my eye there were spots Remnants of mud From the path</p>	<p>ביום השלישי בבית מול הטלוויזיה שאלתי את אמי אני ביתך, יחידך אשר אהבת?</p> <p>ביום השלישי מול כוור עמוס כלים בין האש והעצים שאלתי את אמי איה השעה לעולה</p> <p>רגע לפני שהרימה את ידה ספרתי לאמא שהגוף משקר לי והוספתי שאני משקרת גם לו</p> <p>הוא אומר שימות קודם אני אומרת שאני</p> <p>בצאתי סגרתי את הדלת על העין כתמים שאריות בז מהדרך</p>
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Case Study #3: How do we remember?

Source #4 Jaqueline Shohet Kahanoff: *Mama Camouna*

Found in *Mongrels or Marvels*

Then I remember my grandmother telling me when I was a child how Mama Camouna and the other women would take the children to the Jewish cemetery in Tunis, so the dear dead wouldn't be lonely. "At first we lamented and tore at our cheeks, and then we'd settle down for a collation, and the children would play hide and seek among the graves. And we'd remember what our dear ones had said and done and told stories about them. Oh, we'd laugh so much remembering your great-uncle Fragi, because he was so gay, always playing pranks and at weddings he'd compose songs, honoring the bride and groom and their families, with refrains about everybody". Then Grandmother and her daughters would remember those weddings in Tunis, what everybody wore, some of the women still in their traditional dresses, wrapped up in big white silk shawls, and those who already dressed in the style that was "modern" before the First World War. Their infectious laughter sometimes seems to echo among the cold rectilinear alignment of the graves in Holon and they all seem to be there, and I am the surviving witness of something marvelous, warm, vital and live, which I knew but which no longer is.....Gerard knits

his eyebrows and asks, "But how did it happen that for the last three or four generations we've been constantly on the move? And it's not finished, how did it all begin? So mother tells Gerard how in her family it might have begun. "You see, your great grandfather had an oil press in Monastir, a small village in Tunisia. The oil was stored in big jars, like those in the table about Ali Baba and the forty thieves. One jar was kept for ablutions. There was of course no running water in those days. Well, one day, after he had worked hard and sweated and felt very hot, he had the jar filled with cold water and stayed in it too long. He died of pneumonia as a consequence. Times were already changing and your great-grandfather my Uncle David, the eldest son, decided to try his luck in Tunis, the big city, and gradually he brought the whole family over to Tunis, that's how it all began".

"Well" Gerard said, "it's not given to everybody to have had an ancestor who died taking a cold bath in an oil jar. I'll have to tell the cousins in Paris about it. I wonder why Grandmother never did."

"Perhaps," Mother said, at once gentle and reproaching, "because you never asked, how do you want us to tell when you young people aren't interested in those old tales, when you can't be bothered with the past, because the world you live in is so different, isn't it best to wait until you ask?" She glances at me slyly, isn't it so my daughter?"

Source #5

Erez Bitton "Taksir Siha"

What does it mean to be authentic,
To run through the Middle of Tel Aviv Streets
And shout in Moroccan Jewish Arabic:

Ana Min-El Maghreb, Ana Min El-Maghreb (I am from the Atlas Mountains, I am from the Atlas Mountains)